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JAMES DARMESTETER AND HIS STUDIES IN ZEND LITERATURE.

1849-1894.

THE proper biography of a scholar is an autobiography, that is to say, a biography written by himself, written in his own books. The circumstances of his life may concern his friends, but in most cases they need not be published, whether they are meant to gratify the vanity of the survivors, or the vulgar curiosity of the public at large. No one could wish for a better or fuller autobiography in that sense, than may be found in the published works of James Darmesteter. They speak for themselves, and they require a very short commentary only to explain their origin and their purpose. It is right that we should know that James Darmesteter had the good fortune of being born as the son of poor, but high-minded parents, poor Jews, who seem to have lived for their children only, and to have cherished no ambition but to prepare their sons for a useful and honourable career in life. And in this they succeeded beyond all expectation. Arsène, the elder brother of James, was a rising scholar when he died at a very early age. The Dictionary of the French language, which he prepared and began to publish, will be a lasting monument of his industry, his learning, and his sagacity.

The younger brother, James, had secured to himself a foremost place in the brilliant ranks of French scholarship, when he likewise died comparatively early, at the age of forty-nine. One more feature has to be mentioned to explain the spirit in which James Darmesteter devoted his life with unflagging energy to his special studies. He was deformed, and his frail body was to him a constant reminder of the uncertainty of life. It was likewise a very valid excuse for him for declining to waste his precious hours in performing the so-called duties of society. He rather shrank from society, and even among his friends he often seemed impatient to return to his quiet study, and to his oldest and dearest friends, his books. Later in life, and more particularly after his marriage, this retiring disposition may have yielded to a sense of what he owed to his wife and to his friends. Still he always remained self-contained, aloof from the world, and truly at home in his own world only, the world of ancient thought, as preserved and revealed to us in the *Sacred Books of the East*. I did not know James Darmesteter in his younger days. But I began to hear of him from our common friends in Paris, and I was able to take his true measure when he sent me his first important publication, *Haurvatât et Ameretât, Essai sur la Mythologie de l'Avesta*, 1875, and his *Ormazd et Ahriman, leur origines et leur histoire*, 1877. In these treatises he gave proof, not only of his mastery of Zend, the sacred language of the Avesta, but likewise of a critical knowledge of comparative philology and comparative mythology. As a specimen of what he could do as a classical and comparative scholar, he published about the same time in the *Recueil des Travaux originaux et traduits relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Histoire Littéraire*, an essay written in Latin, "De Conjugatione Latini Verbi Dare." What struck me in all these writings was a mind that could not brook anything obscure or nebulous, a mind that did not rest till it had discovered the rational beginnings of mythological and linguistic formations, however irrational

and unintelligible in their later appearance, a mind that could grasp a large array of facts, put them in order and present them in language both clear and bold.

When therefore I had to look out for a scholar to undertake the arduous task of translating the Avesta for the *Sacred Books of the East*, I fixed at once on James Darmesteter as most likely to fall in with my own views, that is to give a translation of these difficult documents such as could be given at the time, taking account of all that had been done before him, avoiding as much as possible all controversy, and adding only such notes as were required to enable students, ignorant of Zend, to understand the fragmentary remains of the ancient faith of Media and Persia. I was pleased to find that the young scholar was willing to accept my proposal, and the almost unanimous expression of opinion on the value of his labours, as published in vol. iv. (1880), and in vol. xxiii. (1883) of my *Sacred Books of the East*, has proved that my choice had been right. I was disappointed, however, when my excellent *collaborateur* declined to undertake the translation of the Yasna and the Vispêrad, not feeling himself, as he declared, quite prepared as yet for that work. He felt convinced, he said, that these chiefly liturgical treatises required for their proper interpretation an ocular knowledge of the sacrifices as still performed by the Mobeds of Bombay. As I could not well leave the gap unfilled, I followed the advice of Darmesteter himself, and accepted the offer of the Rev. Dr. Mills, who had been working for years at the Yasna, and whose translation of Yasna, Vispêrad, Âfrinagân, Gâhs and Miscellaneous Fragments, published in 1887, successfully completed the translation of the Avesta which I had promised in the *Sacred Books of the East*. In Darmesteter's decision to postpone his own translation of the Yasna, we can see the same caution and the same impartiality which distinguish all his work. It is well known that there are two schools of Zend scholarship, which, to judge from the severe criticisms which they pass on each other, seem irreconcilable with

regard to the method that should be followed in the interpretation of the Avesta. One school, chiefly represented by Haug, Benfey, Roth and others, see the true key to the meaning of the Avesta in the Veda and comparative philology; the other school, led by Spiegel and his pupils, consider the tradition, as handed down in Pahlavi and Parsi literature, and in the customs and opinions of living Mobeds, the safest guide of the student of the Zoroastrian religion. We may take it for granted that much is to be said in support of either view, considering the eminence of the scholars who have taken a leading part in these discussions. The first successful attempts at a scientific analysis of the Zend language came from comparative philologists and Sanskrit students, such as Bopp, Lassen, Windischmann and others, and after the publication of the Veda, Vedic scholars, such as Benfey and Roth followed in their track. They certainly brought out wonderful coincidences between the language, the mythology and the religion of the Vedic poets and the Avestic law-givers. Burnouf, however, himself the author of some brilliant discoveries as to the common fund of words and thoughts in the Veda and the Avesta, was nevertheless one of the first who pointed out that the tradition handed down from at least Sassanian times, should not be neglected by European scholars. Much as he criticised Anquetil's translation, which was entirely based on tradition, and on tradition often misunderstood, he availed himself of it whenever he could do so with the good conscience of a scholar. Darmesteter, following his example, showed the same good sense in trying to make use of everything that had been preserved in the traditions of the Mobeds, though always with the provision that it must not be in conflict with the principles of critical scholarship. Such was his faith in the continuity of tradition, particularly with regard to the ceremonial, that soon after his appointment as *Professeur des Langues et Littératures de l'Iran* at the *Collège de France* in 1885, he accepted a scientific mission from

the French Government to India. One of his chief objects was to witness at Bombay the performance of the Parsi ceremonial, and though he did not succeed in being admitted into the Holy of Holies, he saw and heard enough, with the help of some really learned Parsi priests, to gain a clear insight into the liturgical framework of the Zoroastrian faith. But he gained even more by examining a number of Zend, Pahlavi, and Parsi MSS. in the possession of native scholars at Bombay; he learned Guzerathi, and was thus enabled to hold converse with native scholars and also to avail himself of several Guzerathi translations of Zend texts. He succeeded even in adding some fragments to what had been published before of the ancient Zend literature, and he expressed a confident hope that a more systematic search might still bring to light some portions of the Avesta which existed in the third, and the fourth, possibly even in the ninth century A.D., but which have vanished since. After having done all this work at Bombay, Darmesteter travelled on to Afghanistan, in order to study the Pushtu language, and he succeeded not only in collecting a number of Afghan songs (published in *Chants Populaires des Afghans*, 1880-90), but likewise in discovering in the language now spoken at Kabul a distant descendant of Zend or Pahlavi. This was an important discovery, for it once more secured to the language of the Afghans its proper place in the pedigree of the Iranian branch, of which it had been deprived by Dr. Trumpp, who had tried to prove that the Afghan dialect was a direct descendant of Sanskrit, and more closely related to the modern vernaculars of India than of Persia. It is extraordinary how his delicate constitution could have stood the wear and tear of this journey, which, though much easier now than it was in Anquetil's time, is nevertheless both exciting and fatiguing, particularly if, as in Darmesteter's case, it was filled with the uninterrupted work of copying MSS., learning new languages, and delivering addresses both before English and native audiences. Darmesteter had, if

not an iron frame, an iron will, and visible as were often the signs of his bodily sufferings, he never would allow himself to complain. He would never say how tired he was.

And this combination of a delicacy and cautiousness almost feminine, with the courage of a lion, seems to form the distinctive character of the literary work that was to follow his return from India. We have seen how he shrank from translating the Yasna and Vispêrad till he had exhausted all the materials which might prove helpful; we can see the same prudence and circumspection in every line of his translation, in every note in which he weighs the translation of other scholars, and finally decides between the claims of the Vedic and of the traditional schools of interpretation. But when he has once surveyed the whole evidence, he shrinks from no consequences, and few scholars have given proof of greater scientific courage than he has done in the Introduction to his French translation of the Avesta. This translation appeared in the *Annales du Musée Guimet* in three volumes 4to. This magnificent collection of translations of Oriental texts is published in Paris at the expense of a private gentleman, M. Guimet, a rich merchant, who devotes a large portion of the fortune which he has made in the East to the furtherance of a better knowledge of the literary treasures of the East. In this collection Darmesteter published his new translation not only of the Vendidad, the Yashts, and the Khorda-Avesta (vol. xxii., 1892), but likewise of the Vispêrad and the Yasna (vol. xxi., 1892), which he had hesitated to translate for my collection of the *Sacred Books of the East*. The third volume (xxiv., 1893) contained the translation of Zend fragments lately discovered, and last, not least, his important essay, *Recherches sur la Formation de la Littérature et de la Religion des Zoroastriens*. It was in this treatise that he boldly dethroned the Avesta from its antiquity, and brought it down from 1500 B.C. to the beginning of the Christian era. Such an act requires what I call scientific

courage. It is certainly a very common weakness of scholars, more particularly of Oriental scholars, to wish to assign as remote a date as possible to the literary works which they have brought to light. It is the same in China, in Babylon, in Egypt, in Palestine, and in India. Dates such as 5000, 3000, 2000, and 1000 B.C. are freely assigned to inscriptions or to books, though no honest scholar can suppress misgivings that the scaffolding on which these dates repose may some day collapse, and be replaced by a chronology of much humbler proportions. We are too apt to forget that real chronology is possible with synchronisms only, and that when we once ascend to 2000 to 5000 B.C. there are few synchronisms left. There are no nails by which we can fasten the parallel dates of China, India, or Babylon. When there is a certain willingness all seems plausible enough. The Avesta having at first been assigned to the age of Vishtâspa, the half mythical father of Darius, was afterwards raised to the age of 1200 or even 1500 B.C. This was done chiefly on the supposition that the Avesta was a branch of ancient Vedic poetry, and that therefore it could not be much later than the Veda. But what the exact relation of the Avesta to the Veda was has never as yet been fully explained, and the very date of the Veda belongs to those which require what I call a certain amount of willingness on the part of those who accept them. The date of 1200 B.C. or 1500 B.C., which I suggested for the Veda, and the dates of the successive periods of Vedic literature previous to the rise of Buddhism in India, have formed, I believe, a useful working hypothesis, but they cannot claim to be more than that. It is curious, however, that at the very time when the date of the Avesta has been so much depressed, that of the Veda should, on the strength of purely astronomical calculations, have been raised to 3000, nay even to 5000 B.C. To me, all these dates, I must confess, seem to be as problematical now as when I wrote my preface to the fourth volume of the *Rigveda* in 1862, in which this astronomical chronology was fully discussed.

The argument constructed by Darmesteter in proof of the recent date of the Avesta is extremely sagacious, and yet I cannot say that I am quite convinced by it. In order to arrive at a mutual understanding, both the defenders and the opponents of the antiquity of the Avesta and of other sacred books of the East ought, first of all, to distinguish very carefully between the date of a book, in the form in which we possess it, and the date of the original composition of its component parts. I still hold, in spite of all assertions to the contrary, that the existence of books, in our sense of the word, can nowhere be traced beyond about 600-700 B.C. A book, as we understood the term, presupposes the existence of an alphabet, abundance of writing materials, paper, reeds and ink, and most of all, the presence of a reading public. Alphabets, consisting of consonants and vowels, existed, as is well known, at a much earlier time; but it is a long cry from alphabets used in inscriptions and even in treaties and other official documents, to books in alphabetic writing intended to be read by an educated public. If we call Babylonian cylinders or Egyptian hieratic papyri, books—and there is no harm in doing this—the age of books would have to be put back very considerably, possibly to the reign of Yáo, in the twenty-fourth century B.C. But if we retain its destination for a reading public as an essential feature of a book, I doubt whether we can prove the existence of such a thing in any part of the world previous to 600-700 B.C. But if that is so, it by no means follows that the earlier centuries were entirely illiterate. On the contrary, the more we become acquainted with ancient literature the clearer does it become that there was everywhere a period of oral literature, composed and handed down by memory only. It is difficult for us to realise this, because our memory has become something totally different from what it was in ancient times, when writing and reading were unknown, nay, from what it still is in countries such as India, where, though there exist MSS., the Veda can properly be learnt

from the mouth of a teacher only. That people may know the whole of the Veda by heart is a simple fact that can easily be verified by anybody inclined to doubt it, while the accuracy of oral tradition, as superior even to that of MSS., is equally attested in India at the present day. The possibility of composing long poems without paper, pen and ink, forms generally the greatest difficulty. It is absurd, we have been told again and again, to suppose that Homer could have composed the Iliad and the Odyssey without paper, pen, and ink. But on this point also we have now indisputable evidence to the contrary. The Kalevala may not be as great a poem as the Iliad, but it is certainly as large a poem, and it was within the memory of man that Lönnrot and others wrote it down for the first time from the mouth of the people, many of whom could neither read nor write, whether in Finnish or in Swedish. It must, therefore, have been composed by the aid of memory alone. I mention this in order to show that if Darmesteter had proved that the Avesta was not written down before the Arsacide or Sassanian rulers of Persia, he would not have proved thereby that it did not exist as oral literature at a much earlier time. His arguments against the early date of a written Avesta are so strong that it will be difficult altogether to upset them. To begin with, we have no MSS. of the Avesta before the thirteenth century A.D., nor is it likely that more ancient Zend MSS. will ever be discovered. There are, no doubt, the Pahlavi translations, which belong to the fourth century, and were still in existence at the time when the Dînkart was written, say 900 A.D. (*Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. V., p. lxiv.) But what is that compared with the Sassanian and the Achæmenian periods, with the date assigned to Vishtâspa and Darius, to say nothing of the earlier dates ranging from 1200 to 1500 B.C.!

Taking his stand on the Dînkart as translated for the first time by West in the *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXXVII., Darmesteter has made it clear that there is

trustworthy evidence of at least three anterior collections of the Avesta. The account given of the first composition can hardly claim to be called historical, except in so far as it records a belief current at the time. We read that the twenty-one Nasks of the Avesta were the work of Ahura Mazda, and that they were formed from the twenty-one words of the Ahura Vairya prayer. These twenty-one Nasks were supposed to have been presented by Zoroaster to King Vishtâsp, who ordered two copies to be made, one to be deposited in the treasury of Shâpigân, the other in the National Library.

Approaching historical times, the Dînkart goes on to state that the copy in the National Library was burnt by Alexander's soldiers, while the other was carried off by the Greeks to be translated into their own language. This occurrence is more or less confirmed by Greek writers. We enter on really historical ground when we are told that one of the Parthian kings of Persia—Valkhash—was the first to order the fragments of the Avesta to be collected. This Valkhash has, with great plausibility, been identified by Darmesteter with Vologeses I., the contemporary of Nero, 37-68 A.D.

The next collector was the founder of the new Sassanian dynasty of Persia, Ardashir (211-241 A.D.). His chief assistant in the restoration of the old national religion was Tansar. A famous letter of his, translated from the original Pahlavi into Arabic by Ibn al Moqaffa, the well-known translator of *Kalila va Dimnah* (about 850 A.D.), and from Arabic into Persian by Muhammed bin ul Hassan (1210 A.D.), has lately been discovered by Darmesteter and published in the *Journal Asiatique*.

Next came Ardashir's son Shâhpûhr, who reigned from 241 to 272. He made great efforts to collect all that could still be recovered of ancient Avestic literature, not only in Persia, but, as we are told, in India and Greece also. He took particular interest in philosophical and scientific writings, such as were once comprised in the Avesta. Lastly,

Shâhpûhr II., the son of Auhrmazd (309-379), convoked a kind of ecclesiastical council in order to put an end to the division of religion into various sects. The orthodox party was represented by Adarbad, the son of Mahraspand, and an attempt was made to put an end to all forms of dissent, and, at the same time, to close the sacred canon.

Darmesteter argues very correctly that, accepting these statements as historical, there would have been every opportunity for adding portions to the Avesta as late as the time of the council under Shâhpûhr II., that is to say, about as late as the Council of Nicæa. He meets the objection that Zend was at that time a dead language by the statement that, though dead, Zend was still studied and written at that time. The spoken and official language during the Sassanian period was Pahlavi, as preserved in contemporary inscriptions, and in translations of the Avesta; but the sacred language, he thinks, continued to be understood by the priests. If that was so, it was of course possible that religious and philosophical ideas prevailing in neighbouring countries, whether India, Palestine, or Egypt, should have found their way into the Avesta. And here Darmesteter inverts, and at the same time strengthens, his argument by pointing out in the Avesta, even in that small portion which has come down to us, ideas which, as he thinks, could only have reached Persia either from a Jewish, from a Greek, or from an Indian source.

It is difficult to do full justice to the sagacity with which Darmesteter has searched for traces of these three influences, particularly if one does not oneself consider them as quite conclusive. Still, even without being convinced, one cannot help admiring the learned pleading of the great Zend scholar.

The fact that *deva*, or *daeva*, the name for gods in Sanskrit, is used in Zend as the name of evil spirits, was formerly explained as the result of a religious schism that took place at a very early time among Vedic Âryas, and

led to the establishment of the Masdayasnian faith in opposition to the ancient Polytheism of the Vedic worshippers. Darmesteter, on the contrary, would have us believe that the name *deva* was borrowed at a much later time to designate the false gods of India and of other neighbouring nations, and was then transferred to all the evil spirits of the Zoroastrian mythology. But shall we suppose that such names as *Indra*, *Saurva*, and *Naunghaithya* (in Sanskrit, *Indra*, *Sarva*, and *Nâsatya*) existed in Zend as names of evil spirits, but that they were not called by the general name of *daevas* till a much later time, when the Masdayasnians had learnt this name as that of the idols of their Indian neighbours?

Darmesteter takes *Buiti*, the name of a *daeva*, or evil spirit in the Avesta, who was to have killed Zarathushtra, as another name borrowed from India after the rise of Buddhism in that country. The name occurs once as *Buidhi*, which he identifies with the Sanskrit, *Bodhi*. Darmesteter would wish us to believe that the composer of the Nineteenth Fargard of the Vendidad, where this name occurs, had been brought in contact with Indian Buddhism, and that, though he regarded it as a hostile religion, he yet borrowed from it the account of the temptation of Zarathushtra by Angra Mainyu, in imitation of Buddha's temptation by Mâra.

As this argument is hardly strong enough by itself, Darmesteter has tried to support it by the fact that in one of the Yashts *Gaotema* occurs represented as an impostor. *Gautama* is certainly one of the many names of Buddha, but as Gautama was the name of a large family in India, why should not *Gaotema* have been a common name in Persia also?

That Buddhism had reached Persia at the time of Ardashir (211-241 A.D.), and even earlier, may well be admitted, but that a contact of Zoroastrianism with Buddhism should have left no traces beyond those two names of *Buiti* and *Gaotema*, and that they should have become

the names of the adversaries of the half-mythical Zarathushtra, is more difficult to believe.

So much for the supposed Indian influences. The Jewish influence on the Avesta is admitted by Darmesteter himself to be less perceptible; but he points out traces of it in the general character of the Pentateuch and the Avesta. Both have the same object, he says, namely, to write the history of the Creation, and the history of the race, the Jewish on one side, the Iranian on the other; to inculcate the worship of a supreme deity, Jehovah or Ahura Mazda, and to teach a moral code, communicated by them to their prophets, whether Moses or Zarathushtra. All these features, however, might be traced in other religions also, and would scarcely suffice to prove a borrowing from the Pentateuch on the part of the author, or authors, of the Avesta. More special coincidences are the creation of the world in six days in the Pentateuch, and the creation of the world in six periods in the Avesta.¹ The succession of these six periods, however, is different in the two Bibles. Instead of light, heaven, sea, earth, plants, stars, animals, and man, we have in the Avesta heaven, water, earth, plants, animals, and mankind (*Bundahish*, i. 28) as the creation of the six periods.

The account of the Deluge also, no doubt, has many points of similarity; but likewise some important differences.

It is true that the division of the earth among the three sons of Noah is more or less closely matched by the division of the earth among the three sons of Thraêtaona Airya, Sairima, and Tura; but Thraêtaona is not Yima, and it is Yima in the Avesta who corresponds to the character of Noah in the Pentateuch, and not Thraêtaona. Again, that Moses was preceded by three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Zarathushtra by three saints, Vivanghvat, Athwya, and Trita, is certainly curious, but hardly sufficient to support a conclusion such as Darmesteter tries to erect on it.

¹ Mentioned in an *Afrin* only, and in *Yt*, 13, 86.

Admitting that there are certain similarities between the Pentateuch and the Avesta, it would not follow that they must be due to a direct exchange of thought between the Persians and the Jews dispersed in Asia during the first centuries before and after the Christian era. Several of the traditions mentioned by Darmesteter as transferred from Palestine to Persia, are now known to have formed part of the most ancient Semitic folklore, preserved to us in the cuneiform inscriptions of Chaldaea. Therefore, if borrowed at all from a Semitic source, the borrowing might have taken place very long before the first century B.C., and no argument could be derived from it as to the late date of our Avesta.

Far more powerful than his arguments in support of Indian and Jewish influences reaching the Avesta during the Parthian period, are, to my mind at least, Darmesteter's arguments in favour of Greek, and more particularly of Neo-Platonic thoughts having found admission into the Avesta about the beginning of the Christian era.

That the Zoroastrians believed in four great periods of the world, each lasting 3,000 years, is known from Theopompus, who may have seen the very MS. of the Avesta which was carried off by the soldiers of Alexander, and likewise from the Avesta. According to Theopompus, the Magi believed that the good and the evil spirits reign at first alternately, that during the third period they struggle, while during the fourth the good prevail. The Zoroastrians, while agreeing as to the four periods of 3,000 years each, and as to the struggle carried on between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyus during the third, begin the fourth period with the birth of Zoroaster, and end it with the final destruction of Ahriman and the resurrection to eternal life. They differ even more essentially from the account given by Theopompus with regard to the first and second periods. Thus the *Bundahish* (i. 8) declares that in the first period Ormazd produced a spiritual creation, and that for three thousand years his creatures remained in a spiritual state,

without corruption (amûîtâr), without motion, and intangible. It was in the second period only that the world became material, while Ahriman remained in confusion. This conception of a spiritual creation preceding the material creation is so clearly a repetition of the Neo-Platonic conception of a *κόσμος νοητός* preceding the *κόσμος ὁπατός* (in Zend the *sti gâthya* and the *sti mainyava*), that Darmesteter took it confidently as a late importation from Greece or Alexandria. The objection that it occurs in the *Bundahish*, which could not have been written before the Mohammedan conquest of Persia (A.D. 650), and which for other reasons has been assigned to A.D. 881,¹ he meets by showing that, though the *Bundahish* is of recent date, its materials are probably taken from the *Dâmdât*, one of the twenty-one original Nasks, which, to judge from an analysis of it in the *Dînkart*, treated of the creation of the spiritual world and of its change into the material. He actually quotes from the Pahlavi version of the Vendidad a fragment of the lost Zend original of that work, in which the question is asked, "How long did the creation of the good spirit last?" thus leaving no doubt that such a work existed in Zend, and what the chief subject of that lost Nask must have been.

All this shows how careful a pleader Darmesteter could be, and how conscientiously his case was prepared; but we must remember that the idea of a spiritual, followed by a material creation, strange as it may sound to some of us, is not so peculiar in itself that it could have occurred to one mind only, to that of Plato, and have been handed down in one school only, that of the Neo-Platonists of Alexandria. On the contrary, the rudiments of the theory of the Logos—that is, the Spiritual Creation—proceeding from the Supreme Spirit, are to be found in places which Greek influence could not possibly have reached. In a well-known hymn of the Rigveda, *Vâk*, or Speech, is represented as holding the same, or a very similar place, as the Logos in Philo;

¹ *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. V., p. xliii.

and even among uncivilised races, such as the Klamaths and other Red Indian tribes, we meet with utterances which imply the recognition of a spiritual as well as a material creation, such as "Our Old Father created the world by thinking and willing."¹ If in the Avesta, or even in the *Bundahish*, we could point out a single Greek word such as *Logos*, we should be as ready to admit Neo-Platonic influences in the Avesta as in the Fourth Gospel; but without such evidence we ought, I think, to leave it an open question whether the theory of a spiritual and a material creation was of native growth in Persia, or borrowed from Greek philosophers.

In order to be quite fair, we ought still to mention what Darmesteter has to say about the Amshaspands. The Amshaspands, or Amesha Spentas, the Holy Immortals, are six in number, and form, as it were, the staff of Ahura Mazda. They are:—

1. *Vohu-Manô*, i.e., Good Mind, the Guardian of flocks and of man.
2. *Asha-Vahista*, i.e., Perfect Righteousness, the Guardian of fire.
3. *Khshathra-Vairya*, i.e., Good Government, the Guardian of metals.
4. *Spenta-ârmaiti*, i.e., Holy Piety or Humility, the Guardian of the earth.
5. *Haurvatât*, i.e., Health, the Guardian of water.
6. *Ameretât*, i.e., Immortality, the Guardian of plants.

These six Spirits were known to Plutarch in the first century A.D., though he may not always have understood their character quite accurately. He explains *Vohu-Manô* as θεὸς εὐνοίας, *Asha-vahista* as θεὸς ἀληθείας, *Khshathra-vairya* as θεὸς εὐνομίας, *Spenta-ârmaiti* as θεὸς σοφίας, *Haurvatât* as θεὸς πλούτου, *Ameretât* as τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς καλοῖς ἡδέα.

It is quite clear that these divine beings are not, like

¹ *Gifford Lectures*, Vol. IV., p. 383.

the oldest Gods in the Avesta, of physical origin. The question is, Were they abstractions formed by the Mazdayasnians themselves, or were they borrowed from Greece? The names are certainly Persian, and in the case of *Haurvatât* and *Ameretât*, Darmesteter has himself in one of his earliest essays established their Vedic antecedents. He has also shown that all of them began with abstractions, not intuitions, and that it was by a natural after-growth that they became personal, and were at last connected with physical phenomena. Nevertheless, he now holds that these Amshaspands, and more particularly the first and most important of them, *Vohu-manô*, the Good Mind, represented a thought borrowed from Neo-Platonism, that he was, in fact, the representative of the Logos, as taught at Alexandria, as known to Philo, and as transferred to Palestine by Jews who had been living in Alexandria. No one could doubt that this doctrine of the Logos might have been carried from Alexandria to Persia, just as it might have been to Jerusalem by such men as Apollos, a Jew mighty in the Scriptures, who was born at Alexandria, or by the Synagogue of the Alexandrians, mentioned in the Acts, or by the author of the Fourth Gospel, who, whatever his name, was certainly no stranger to the doctrines of the Neo-Platonists. The manner in which this Second Person, or the Good Mind, is spoken of in the Avestic writings reminds one most forcibly of expressions used of the Logos by philosophers, and of the Son by the Christians of Alexandria, such as St. Clement and Origen. He is called¹ the first-born of all beings, through whom in the beginning Ahura created the world and the true religion. He is the type of the human race, and at last the intercessor between Ahura and man, to obtain forgiveness of sins.

It must be confessed that to a student fresh from Philo or from Origen, these coincidences sound startling; and

¹ Darmesteter, III., p. 53.

yet we must always remember that if the development of the Logos in the Neo-Platonic sense from the fundamental conceptions of Plato and Aristotle, was natural and intelligible, considering the necessity of having some kind of connecting link between the transcendent Deity and the phenomenal world, so would be the parallel development of the Vohu-Manô, as the instrument through which Ahura Mazda was able to create and to rule the world. This may seem a very lame argument, yet, though I am not satisfied by it, I cannot forget that the whole system of Angels and Archangels has always been supposed to have been borrowed by the Jews from the Zoroastrian, rather than by the Zoroastrians from the Jews. And while in the Avestic writings we find not a single foreign name borrowed from a Jewish source, we actually find one Zend name at least in the book of Tobit. One of the evil spirits created by Ahriman to oppose Ormazd and his six Amshaspands, was *Aeshma*, and this *Aeshma*, under the form of *Aeshmô daevô*, has been proved by Kohut and Windischmann, to have been the original of *Asmodeus*. This shows the direction of a stream of thought flowing from Persia to Judæa, but not from Judæa to Persia.

One more difficulty has to be mentioned which prevents us from accepting Darmesteter's theory of the late and Neo-Platonic origin of the Amshaspands. We saw that there were six Amshaspands, and Darmesteter himself admits that five of them were later developments of the original idea embodied in Vohu-Manô. The third of these Amshaspands is called in the Avesta *Khshathra-Vairya*, generally translated by Good Government, but meaning literally Strong Government. This is pure Zend, and very near to the corresponding Sanskrit words *Kshatra* and *Vîrya*. We have hitherto supposed that this name was gradually corrupted to *Khashtarvar*, *Shatrêvar*, *Shahrêvar*, and *Shehrîûr*. Fortunately, we can fix the date of one of these corruptions from coins which were

struck by Indo-Scythian rulers such as Kanishka (about 78 A.D.), and Huvishka (111-129 A.D.). On one of the coins of Huvishka we read the name *Raoreoro* or *Raoreoar*, which is as exact a rendering of *Shahrévar* as it was possible to give in the Indo-Scythian Greek alphabet.¹ We are now asked to believe that the Mazdayasnians knew nothing of their *Khshathra-Vairya* till about the first or second century after Christ, that is, till about the very time when this Persian Deity was borrowed by the Indo-Scythian rulers of India, under the corrupt form of *Shahrévar* or *Raoreoro*. This seems altogether impossible, while the former theory, that the old form *Khshathra-Vairya* became changed to *Shéhrevār* in the course of centuries and in obedience to the phonetic laws of Persian, and was adopted in that modern form by Huvishka, is simple, intelligible, and, as far as I can judge, indisputable. The ideas, too, which lie imbedded in *Khshathra-Vairya*, must surely have passed through a long process before they could dwindle down to the meaning conveyed by *Shahrévar*.

It may seem hardly fair in an obituary notice to enter upon a criticism of the opinions of a departed scholar. Still, as I said at the beginning, the true life of a scholar is written in his books, and they are of more interest than the small events which mark the stations of his pilgrimage on earth. Nor should I wish to be understood as if I undervalued Darmesteter's arguments in support of a late date of the Zend Avesta ; all I wish to say is that I am not convinced, though I feel at the same time that the facts and arguments he has brought together on his side of the question, can never again be ignored, and deserve, if they are to be demolished at all, to be demolished by a better Zend scholar than I can claim to be. It is to be regretted that in discussing questions of scholarship, one is always supposed to be discussing persons rather than things. The

¹ See Stein, Zoroastrian Deities on Indo-Scythian coins, in *Oriental and Babylonian Record*. August. 1887, p. 161.

true scholar, however, cares not about *who* is right, but only about *what* is right. It happens, not unfrequently, that the man whose views in the end prove to be wrong, possesses and displays a far greater amount of sound knowledge than he who seems almost to divine the truth, and is able to unravel at once the most confused tangle of facts and arguments. Darmesteter possessed, certainly, a vast amount of positive knowledge, nor did he allow this burden to weigh down his critical faculty or his brilliant combination. His arguments are always to the point, his workmanship is always clean and sharp-cut. It seems the very consciousness of his strength that makes him attempt the most difficult tasks, which no one before him has ventured to approach. As I said in another article, his essay on the modern date of the Avesta, has fallen like a bomb into the peaceful camp of Zend scholars, and no one has yet succeeded in quenching it or carrying it away. I am the last person to undertake this dangerous task, but I could not, in giving an account of Darmesteter's literary achievements, suppress altogether the doubts which remain in my mind after a careful study of his work.

Darmesteter himself avoided, as much as possible, any literary feuds. He preferred to discuss opinions rather than men. He would often controvert certain views, and establish new facts, without once mentioning the names of those who were responsible for them. Still even he did not altogether escape from personal conflicts, and his controversy with Dr. de Harlez, now happily forgotten, is but another instance how two scholars of very high merit can say most painful things of each other, while all the time working, and working well, each in his own way, in the same noble cause, in the conquest of truth. There is no doubt that Darmesteter's last thesis will continue the subject of fierce controversy for years to come, but now that the author of it has been taken away from us, it will no doubt be carried on with the respect due to the dead, which is so often denied to the living.

My account of the literary labours of Darmesteter, which I was unexpectedly asked to write, is chiefly confined to the publications which had brought me in contact with him, and which were, therefore, quite familiar to me. Even if at Oxford I had been able to procure some of his other works, I should not have had time to read them, still less to judge them. But the following list of his publications, which I partly owe to the kindness of friends, will give an idea of his wide interests, and his comprehensive studies.

"Le Mahdi depuis les origines de l'Islam."

"Jemrud et la légende de Jemshid" (*Journ. Asiat.*, 8^e série, tom. viii.).

"Points de contact entre le Mahabhârata et le Shâh-Nameh" (*ibid.* t. x. p. 6).

"Les inscriptions de Caboul" (*ibid.* t. xi., p. 491).

"L'apocalypse de Daniel" (*Mélanges Renier*, p. 405).

"Souvenirs bouddhistes sur l'Afghanistan" (*Journ. Asiat.*, 8^e série, t. xv., p. 195).

"La grande inscription de Qandahar" (*Ibid.* t. xv., p. 195).

"Etudes Iraniennes," 2 vols., Paris, 1883.

"Essais orientaux," Paris, 1883.

"Les Prophètes d'Israël," Paris, 1892.

"L'apocryphe persan de Daniel" ("Bibl. des Hautes Études," fasc. 73.)

In the *Revue des Etudes Juives*.

"Les six feux dans le Talmud et dans le Bundahish" (tom. i., p. 186).

"David et Rama" (t. II., p. 300).

"Textes Pahlavis relatifs au Judaïsme" (xviii. 1, xix. 41).

"Chants populaires des Afghans, précédés d'une introduction sur la langue, l'histoire et la littérature des Afghans," 1890.

This list may give an idea of his indefatigable industry. Darmesteter had for many years to support himself by his pen, and he did me the honour at that time to translate my Hibbert Lectures into French, *Origine et Développe-*

ment de la Religion, études à la lumière des Religions de l'Inde, 1879. His struggle for life must often have been very severe and very painful, but his last years were rendered bright and sunny by the tenderness of a devoted friend. Though he had accepted the editorship of a great French Review, a step which his colleagues and friends regretted, he did not become unfaithful to his Oriental studies. To the very last day of his life he worked hard at a new edition of his translation of the Avesta, for the *Sacred Books of the East*. Few only of the works constituting that large series, have as yet had the honour of a second edition, and it does great credit to the public in England and abroad that they should have discovered the exceptional value of the labour garnered in those two volumes. It will be no easy task to arrange the materials which he has left for publication, but the first volume is nearly printed, and the introduction, containing his latest views on the Avesta, is almost ready for press. Happy as he was in his birth, he was even happier in his death. After a cheerful conversation with his wife on some literary plans, he rested in his chair, while the bright sunlight streamed down upon him through the window of his library, a parting greeting from Mithra, the friend of light and truth, whom he had served so faithfully during his life on earth. He fell asleep unconsciously, and never opened his eyes again.

F. MAX MÜLLER.
